1: Meek E, G-5 (1925-1930) 1931
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liquid is drained off, leaving the sediment, poured into another pot, boiled and left to cool, and is then ready for use.

Various Social Regulations.—Each Katab woman takes one complete day's turn at cooking the food for the entire household, old women alone being exempted from this duty. Thus the principal wife of the head of the household may cook to-day, the second wife to-morrow, a son's wife on the following day, and so on. Numerous jealousies arise from the practice. A wife will take notice of the fact that her husband does not appreciate her cooking, and rival wives will watch to see that the food supplied by the cook of the day represents the amount of corn issued for that day. Women of the compound will charge the cook with having kept back a proportion of the corn in order to sell it in the market for her own advantage. Women are not allowed to cook during their menses. Food cooked by a woman in this condition is said to affect the eyesight of the person who eats it. Married women help their mothers-in-law in various domestic duties, especially in the matter of the preparation of meals, and junior wives assist the senior wives. The senior wife, it may be noted, is the first wife married, and she may be a mere child in years to the second wife. The junior wives eat their meals at the porch of the hut of the senior wife, who is the president of the female society.

Men do not eat with women, and there are numerous rules as to who may eat from the same calabash. A father, for example, would avoid sharing his calabash with his eldest son; it would create disrespect. He would share his meal with his youngest son, or better still, with his grandson. The sons also have their own rules. The eldest son would avoid sharing his calabash with the son immediately junior—he would share it with the next but one, and so on.

A Katab husband sleeps two nights successively with each wife. If he has a hut of his own his wife sleeps there; but otherwise he sleeps in his wife's hut. The first wife, we have said, is the senior wife socially, and she is the "real wife", for even if she abandons her husband she will usually one day return. It is believed that in the future life a man has one wife only and that she is the woman he had first married.

Daily Life.—We may now give a rough summary of the daily life of the Katab. Rising at sunrise the head of the household

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movement. Later, and until puberty, they discard these in favour of a girdle of thin plaited grass which is tied round the waist, the loose ends being passed between the legs from front to back and made fast at the back by being passed underneath the girdle. Married women wear on the buttocks the peculiar circular plaited tray-like adornment, resembling an inverted mushroom, which is known as the *oyam*,[1] and is characteristic of the Katab, Kachichere, Kagoro, Ataka, Kaje, Jaba, and the Ikulu section of the Kadara tribe. It is kept in position by a string passed round the waist. It is frequently smeared with red oil, and the edges may be adorned with white beads. It would appear that the *oyam* has undergone considerable evolution in recent times, and that originally it consisted of the stalk only. A small tray was then superimposed, and this has grown during the last twenty years from a diameter of six inches to twelve or even eighteen inches. The reason assigned for this change of feminine fashions is that nowadays there is no war and women do not have to run away. In war time a large *oyam* would have been an encumbrance! It is certainly an encumbrance to-day, as it has to be pushed on one side on sitting down. The original *oyam* may have had some phallic significance, but is more probably an ornate development of the ordinary buttock-covering of grass or leaves, the primary object of which is to secure decency while bending at work in the fields. An apron of leaves may be worn underneath the *oyam*, and an apron of leaves is always worn over the pubes. The leaves are changed every day, and sometimes twice a day. Katab women after giving birth tie up the abdomen with strings of rolled palm leaves. The intention is to prevent distension of the abdomen, and the custom is therefore similar to that commonly followed in Europe to-day. At night a man sleeps in his loin-covering. Women and children sleep nude. The husband may cover himself and his wife with a cloth; but, as there is always a wood fire burning through the night and the houses are designed so as to afford complete protection from the weather, blankets are not required.

Tribal Marks.—The Katab, Kagoro, Morwa, Kaje, Ikulu, and Kamantam all affect the same design of tribal markings, which are approximately as follows:—

[1] Sometimes pronounced *oyum*.

2: Gunn E-4 (no date) 1956 FF38 Katab FF38

but subsequently spends three or four months " in her own home " (presumably her paternal compound? In societies where secondary marriage is common, a special connection with the mother, wherever she may reside, is usual, however).

According to Meek, co-wives of the father's mother attend the birth. The umbilical cord is severed with a razor, and was formerly planted with a seed yam which, when mature, was fed to the child: current practice is not stated. The placenta is casually buried " at the back of the house "; no beliefs are attached to it, according to Meek, but his diagram of a Katab compound shows that the mother's " bean-garden " lies at the back of her house. It was stated in 1921 that boys are circumcised at birth, but Meek does not mention circumcision.

Naming, usually a more or less casual matter, is performed two days after birth. If the mother has lost a number of children, the ***elenowum*** (presumably of the father's lineage) may at this time preside over ceremonial beer-drinking with prayers. Every child's uvula is clipped on the naming day.

According to Meek, the first child is taken when two months old to the home of the wife's parents who, after an interval of a month, summon the husband and hold a feast. " Prayers are offered for the child's welfare by the wife's father or brother, who then delivers him back to the husband, saying, ' Take this child in full payment of the labour which you [when a suitor] expended on my farm.' The second child has to be redeemed, at the present day, by a money payment of seven shillings, which is regarded as compensation to the wife's parents for expenditure incurred on her . . . trousseau. If the payments were not made the wife's parents could retain the child. . ." Meek does not indicate how the time of this ceremonial fits in with the return of the wife to her parents' compound for a period of months, as already described.

During the period of lactation it is common practice for a mother to cover her entire body and head with red ochre, to improve her supply of milk. Until the child is weaned, intercourse between mother and father is prohibited, this period lasting up to three years. Boys sleep in their mother's hut till they are five years of age, girls until they marry.

Meek writes of " adoption " among the Katab, which might be described more accurately as " sharing " or " lending " children, " to a respected paternal relative who has fewer children . . . or requires an additional worker on his farm. Male children are not handed over to a maternal relative in this way; but . . . a man has to ransom his second child [of whichever sex] by a money payment to his wife's parents. Female children are, however, sometimes handed over to the mother's parents; but when such children marry, the mother's parents are not entitled to receive the bride-price."

Initiation

There appears to be no record of circumcision among Katab proper. Tribal initiation, according to Meek, takes the form of initiation into the public cult of *obwai*,[84] associated apparently with the private ancestral cult, but there are no elaborate initiation rites. Children, presumably boys only, of four to eight years are taken to the *obwai* hut, warned to be obedient to their parents and given food. The short ceremony ends with a form of baptism in a stream, the smearing of the boys' heads with mahogany oil, and a feast in the village. Though it is not made clear, this initiation no doubt occurs at the appearance of the *obwai*. It appears that no personal insignia are issued to the individual, at this time, at least (contrast Kaje, p. 112 below).

Boys receive their facial markings later, " some years after they have begun to engage in agricultural work." Girls receive their markings in connection with their primary marriage (see below), probably at much the same age as boys, since girls marry very young. Marking is apparently done individually and without particular rites or ceremonies.

[84] See below, p. 79.